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KING IN BLACK
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OH...YOU'RE BACK.
AND...AND SO AM I. *UNFORTUNATELY.*
THIS IS KLYNTAR, THE HOMEWORLD OF SYMBIOTES LIKE VENOM. AND LIKE *KNULL*--THE SYMBIOTE GOD, AND ONE OF THE FEW CREATURES IN THE GALAXY THAT TRULY *SPOOKS* ME.
BAD VIBES. LIKE...THE *WORST* VIBES. LIKE, RANCID, REPULSIVE, DISGUSTING VIBES. I WOULD SAY MORE, BUT I DON'T HAVE A THESAURUS HANDY!
NEEDLESS TO SAY, KLYNTAR IS *NOT* AN IDEAL VACATION SPOT.
I WOULDN'T COME TO KLYNTAR, EVEN IF MY LIFE DEPENDED ON--
HEY, WHO'S *THAT?*

PARTY TIME!
PAR-TY PAR-TY PAR-TY!
PAR-TY PAR-TY PAR-TY!
RRR-RR RRR-RR RRR-RR!
PAR-TY PAR-TY PAR-TY!
PAR-TY! PAR--EW!
!!
WHAT IS THIS?
YEAH! AND WHERE ARE THE PRISTINE BEACHES? THE CRYSTAL CLEAR OCEANS? THE TIKI BARS ON EVERY CORNER?
MRRR?

TIKI BARS?
I WAS TOLD THIS IS THE BEST VACATION SPOT IN THE GALAXY!
AND WHO TOLD YOU ALL THAT, BEN? WAS IT--?
JOHNNY STORM!
MMM-HMM. AND IS IT POSSIBLE JOHNNY WAS JUST MESSING WITH--?
HE WAS TOTALLY MESSIN' WITH ME!
AND, ROCKET! YOU'RE SOME SORTA INTERGALACTIC TRAVELER. WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY NOTHING?
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO KREE-LAR! THE LAST TIME THE GUARDIANS WERE ON KLYNTAR, WE BARELY ESCAPED WITH OUR HIDES INTACT.
IT TOOK MY TECHNICAL GENIUS TO GET US UP INTO--
--SPAAAAAACE!

I GUESS I SHOULDA PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THEIR TOURISM SLOGAN! WHAT HAPPENS ON KLYNTAR--
--DOESN'T MATTER, BECAUSE EVERYONE IS DEAD!
GRRRR!
JEFF!
TAKE THIS!
GHA! IT TOOK THAT PRETTY EASILY! AND NOW ONE'S GOT ME!
GRRR!
A LITTLE HELP, GUYS?
GRRR!
JEFF
SPLOOT
SURE THING, DOREEN! WE'LL BE THERE...AS SOON AS WE CAN!
THIS IS SO STRESSFUL! LET'S GO SEE WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING ON THIS PLANET!

UHM...BLADE AND SHURI ARE HERE? THAT'S WEIRD. AND SCIENCE WAS NEVER MY BEST SUBJECT...
...SO LET'S GO LOOK AT SOMETHING ELSE!
WAIT--IS THAT THE PHOENIX FORCE?
AND IT'S FIGHTING *HELA?*
NOPE, NOPE, NOPE, NOPE!
BACK TO THE PARTY CREW!
HEY, GREAT NEWS! IT LOOKS LIKE THE FIGHT IS OVER! AND I'M SURE OUR HEROES PREVAILED!
BUT...WHERE ARE THEY?
OH...
OH NO!
...*THERE* THEY ARE.
PARTY TIME.

POOR ROCKET RACCOON! AND THE THING! AND SQUIRREL GIRL!
AND JEFF!
THEY JUST WANTED TO GO ON A NICE LITTLE VACATION! WHY DIDN'T THEY GO TO BATTLEWORLD?
NO, WAIT, THAT WOULD ALSO BE BAD.
SAKAAR? SKRULLOS? EGO THE LIVING PLANET?
WOW, THERE ARE A LOT OF SCARY PLANETS OUT THERE!
TASTY...BUT SCARY!
MEANWHILE, THIS IS STILL GOING ON!
YEAH!
I AM DEFINITELY THE BEST PERSON TO FIGHT AN ASGARDIAN DEATH GODDESS!
ESPECIALLY ONE BONDED TO AN ALIEN SYMBIOTE!
GHA! THERE IS WEBBING ON MY FACE!
SPIDER-MAN! I CAN'T GET A CLEAN SHOT WITH YOU IN THE WAY!
SORRY, JEAN! OR, UHM, MRS. PHOENIX FORCE, LADY, MA'AM.
UNTWHIP
THAT WAS VERY ANNOYING.

FWAM
WHOA! NICE JOB, JEAN! OR, UHM, MRS. PHOENIX FORCE, LA--
NO, SPIDER-MAN! WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO LISTEN TO ALL THIS AGAIN!
SO, LET'S SEE WHAT BLADE AND SHURI ARE UP TO!
STILL CLEAR OUT THERE, SHURI.
NO SYMBIOTES IN SIGHT.
I TOLD YOU, BLADE--CHECK IN IF SOMETHING IS WRONG, NOT WHEN EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT.
BUT THEN HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
YOU'RE RIGHT. I BROUGHT YOU WITH ME TO STAND GUARD. AND--
NO, YOU DIDN'T.
ANYONE COULD STAND GUARD. WHY TAKE ONE OF THE BEST WARRIORS AWAY FROM THE FIGHT?

BECAUSE YOU STILL HAVEN'T PROCESSED YOUR TRAUMA FROM...WHAT *HAPPENED* WITH DRACULA.
SO I THOUGHT A LIGHTER DUTY WOULD BE GOOD FOR NOW. I'M JUST LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.
YOU DO *NOT* HAVE TO *LOOK OUT* FOR ME.
I AM THE DAYWALKER. I AM *FEARED* ACROSS THE GALAXY. I AM--
--ARROGANT BEYOND BELIEF.
MEANWHILE, *I* AM DESPERATELY TRYING TO FIND A *WEAKNESS* IN THE SYMBIOTES. SO LET ME WORK.
JEAN GREY WILL SOON BE OVERWHELMED. THE SYMBIOTES ARE PICKING OFF OUR ALLIES ONE BY ONE--
NO, THIS CAN'T HAPPEN TO ME! NOT WHEN ALL THE *GOOD* SYMBIOTE NAMES ARE ALREADY *TAKEN*!
CALL ME *ALLERGEN*!
OR MAYBE *KERFUFFLE*!

--AND THE FASTER I GET MY WORK DONE, THE FASTER WE CAN *REJOIN* PHOENIX IN HER BATTLE AGAINST HELA.
GOOD.
BECAUSE A BIT OF RIGHTEOUS VIOLENCE IS *EXACTLY* WHAT I--
BLADE, IS THAT...AN *ACORN?*
OH, *SH--*
--URI, GET OUT!

GRRRR!
RA RA RA!
I DON'T THINK SO.
YOU'RE NOT GONNA GOBBLE ME UP IN YOUR WHIRLPOOL!
ENOUGH 'A THIS! LET'S TACKLE HIM!
AAAAGH!
GET READY FOR YOUR VERY OWN SYMBIOTE, DAYWALKER!
IT'S OVER!
OH NO. NOT AGAIN!
IS EVERYTHING GONNA END THIS WAY?
NO!
YOU INVITED ME TO THIS DANCE...
...BUT I SAY WHEN THE MUSIC STOPS!

I'M NOT GONNA LIE, READERS. THINGS ARE GETTING REALLY BAD DOWN THERE ON KLYNTAR!
LIKE... CAPTAIN AMERICA-WITH-A-SYMBIOTE BAD!
KERFUFFLE! TAKE THE RIGHT FLANK!
ON IT, CAPTAIN DESPAIR-ICA!
WHAT?
WE'LL KEEP WORKSHOPPING!
OH, BUT GOOD NEWS! SOME OF OUR HEROES HAVE ALSO BEEN GIVEN PHOENIX POWERS, AFTER THE PHOENIX EGG BROKE AND SPLATTERED ITS COSMIC YOLKY GOODNESS ACROSS A BUNCH OF OTHER HEROES.
UNFORTUNATELY, IT LED TO A TERRIFYING BATTLE FOR THE FATE OF KLYNTAR!
IT'S A WHOLE BIG THING.

AND SPEAKING OF WHOLE BIG THINGS, BLADE AND SHURI ARE STILL FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES AGAINST SYMBIOTE-D BEN GRIMM AND ALL HIS SYMBIOTE-D BUDDIES!
IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED--
OOF!
FLY, FLY AGAIN!
MAYBE AVOID CLOSE CONTACT, HUH, THING?
ALL WE NEED IS A LITTLE...
...OLD-FASHIONED...

...ROCKET POWER!
RRRRR!
YIKES! HIS ROCKET POWER HIT JEFF INSTEAD!
DON'T TRY THAT AGAIN!
GRRAGH!
YEAH! TRY THIS INSTEAD!
FWOOM

ENOUGH!
OKAY, ROCKET... CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE TURNED THE TABLES ON SHURI. AND YOU'VE PISSED ME OFF.
SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO *NOW?*
I'M A *TACTICAL GENIUS,* BLADE. WHAT DO YOU *THINK* I'M GONNA DO NOW?
...
RUN!
WHY ARE WE RUNNING? WE WUZ JUST GETTING STARTED!
THE BOSS MAN WANTED US TO DESTROY HER RESEARCH, AND WE DID IT.
NOW IT'S TIME TO JOIN THE *REAL* BATTLE.

YOU OKAY?
YES... PHYSICALLY, I'M FINE.
BUT ALL MY HARD WORK...ALL MY RESEARCH, GONE.
AND NOW WHO WILL WIN? IT COULD GO EITHER WAY.
YEAH. BECAUSE I HAVEN'T ENTERED THE BATTLE YET. THEY MAY HAVE CRAZY PHOENIX POWERS AND WILDING SYMBIOTES.
...BUT I HAVE A MYSTICAL SWORD. AND FANGS TO SUCK THE POWERS RIGHT OUT OF THEM.
GASP!
YOU HAVE AN IDEA?
NO...NO, IT WOULDN'T WORK. NO ONE SHOULD EVER HAVE THAT KIND OF POWER. NOT EVEN YOU.
TELL ME MORE.

HEY! THIS ISN'T KLYNTAR!
AND IT'S NOT THE PRESENT. I WANT TO TAKE YOU BACK...
...TO A DIFFERENT PLANET. IN A DIFFERENT SEASON.
SET ME FREE!
HEHEH.
HOW YOU WOULD LOVE THAT.
THE DELICIOUS FREEDOM OF ETERNAL REST.
I DON'T WANT REST.
I WANT-- I NEED REVENGE.
YOU MAY THINK YOU'RE ONE BAD MOTHER, DRACULA, BUT ONCE I SHOVE A STAKE THROUGH YOUR HEART, YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DEAD VAMPIRE.

SO STRONG. SO DANGEROUS.
BUT I *SENSE* YOUR HELPLESSNESS. YOUR DESPERATION.
I KNOW HOW BADLY YOU WISH TO DESTROY ME, BLADE...
...BUT YOU CAN'T.
ISN'T THAT *SAAAAD?*
AAAAARGH!

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO KLYNTAR. IN THE HERE AND NOW.
UNFORTUNATELY!
BLADE! DON'T DO THIS!
I HAVE TO!
NO, YOU WANT TO!
OKAY...
...YOU'VE GOT ME THERE.
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING!
DAYWALKER!
YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH!
AND YOU'RE USING A SOUL DRAINER.

BUT IF I STILL HAVE A SOUL...
...IT AIN'T DOING MUCH FOR ME!
AAAAH!
HOW DARE--?
JEAN! PSYCHICALLY TAP INTO MY VAMPIRIC POWERS! SIPHON HELA'S LIFE FORCE!
WHAT?
DO IT!
THIS IS TOO MUCH, BLADE! I NEED TO STOP!
DON'T... YOU DARE!
NOT WHEN IT'S WORKING!

OH! HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
I KNOW I SHOULDN'T BRAG, BUT...I'M REALLY GOOD AT HIDING.
ESPECIALLY FROM SYMBIOTES.
HEY, WHERE YOU BEEN, BUDDY?
WE ARE GROOT!
YEAH, TELL ME ABOUT IT.
AND MEANWHILE, BLADE AND JEAN GREY AND HELA ARE STILL DOING... WHATEVER THIS IS.

GHAA!
HELA...ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOUR NIGHTSWORD...
...IS IN MY GUT?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
NO...THIS IS TORTURE.
BUT I'VE BEEN TORTURED BEFORE. AT LEAST THIS TIME, IT'S MY CHOICE.
AND IT SERVES MY PURPOSE.
GHAA!

I CAN FEEL IT...
THE AWESOME MIGHT OF THE PHOENIX FORCE.
THE RUTHLESS STRENGTH OF THE SYMBIOTES.
COMBINED!
I FEEL EVERYTHING.
YOU...YOU'VE GAINED THE POWERS OF BOTH SIDES. HOW DID YOU KNOW THIS WOULD HAPPEN?
I DIDN'T. BUT SHURI THOUGHT IT MIGHT. BIG SCIENCE BRAIN AND ALL THAT.
AND NOW, THROUGH PAIN AND SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE...I'M THE ONLY PERSON TO REPRESENT BOTH SIDES OF THIS MYSTICAL DIVIDE! THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN SAVE US FROM DESTRUCTION.
THE ONLY PERSON WHO--
HEY! YOU GAINED THE POWERS OF THE PHOENIX FORCE AND THE SYMBIOTES TOO? LOT OF THAT GOING AROUND, I GUESS!
VENOM! YOU...YOU LOOK LIKE...
A HARDCORE WARRIOR? A COSMIC KILLER?
A DEMONIC ROOSTER, BRO.
BUT... HOW?
UHHH... HAPPENSTANCE?

KERFUFFLE! WHILE THEY'RE PRATTLING ON, SHOULD WE...
ATTACK? YEAH. YEAH, STORM, WE SHOULD DEFINITELY ATTACK.
WE FOUND A SHARD OF PHOENIX EGG AND IT GAVE US ITS POWERS. SAID IT WAS BECAUSE IT LOVED US.
OH.
DID IT AT LEAST... HURT?
ATTACK!
WHAT? NO.
WHY WOULD IT HURT?
OH...
SWAT
SLAM
...NO REASON.

LET'S GET 'EM!
ENOUGH OF THIS.
FWOOOOM
ENOUGH OF ALL OF THIS.
WHOA! BLADE JUST TOOK ALL HIS COMPETITION OFF THE BOARD!
ALL BUT...
SO...YOU WANNA HELP US TAKE HELA DOWN?
NO.
BUT I'LL LET YOU HELP ME.

AHHHHHHH!
BLADE AND VENOM HAVE THE COMBINED POWERS OF SYMBIOTES AND THE PHOENIX FORCE! AND THEY'RE USING IT TO FIGHT HELA!
AHHHHHHH!
BLADE! YOU'RE SO POWERFUL NOW...
...BUT IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH!
YEAH. GOOD THING HE AIN'T ALONE.
AND IF YOU'RE KEEPING SCORE, THAT'S ONE DIRECT HIT FOR US. NONE FOR YOU, BLADE--
AND SEVERAL HUNDRED FOR ME.
TIME TO UNLEASH HEL!
VENOM! CAN YOU SEE--?
DARKNESS! AND NOT THE KIND I ENJOY!
ALL RIGHT...

CHOMP
KAAWWGRK!
ENOUGH...
...OF...
...THIS.
OH NO. HE'S TAPPED INTO HIS VAMPIRIC BLOODLUST. HE'S PUTTING HIMSELF IN A FRENZY.
OH NO! HE'S TAPPED INTO HIS VAMPIRIC BLOODLUST! HE'S PUTTING HIMSELF IN A FRENZY!
I KNOW SHURI ALREADY SAID THAT, BUT IT'S REALLY FREAKING ME OUT!

VENOM!
HIT HER NOW!

NO! I AM THE GODDESS OF DEATH!
I DO NOT GO DOWN THIS WAY!
I DO NOT--
GOODBYE, KERFUFFLE!
GOODBYE, ALL YOU KRUTACKIN' SYMBIOTES! TALK ABOUT OVERSTAYIN' YOUR WELCOME!
RRRR!
SO... SHE'S GONE? THE BATTLE'S OVER?
WELL... WE STILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH KNULL.

BUT DON'T LOOK SO GLUM, BLADE.
WE WON FOR NOW!
YEAH.
FOR NOW.
BLADE. TALK TO ME. HOW DO YOU FEEL?
GOOD.
POWERFUL.
YES. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THAT PHOENIX POWER IS DOING TO YOU. PHYSICALLY. EMOTIONALLY. PSYCHOLOGICALLY.
WHICH IS WHY YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT UP.
YOU... KNOW YOU HAVE TO GIVE IT UP.
RIGHT?

HAND OVER MY POWER?
YES. I KNOW.
AND IF YOU FORGET-- I'LL BE THERE TO REMIND YOU.
YES...
WHATEVER IT TAKES.
THE END

THIS JANUARY

YOU CAN ALSO FOLLOW THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF THE MARVEL RIVALS IN OUR WEEKLY INFINITY COMIC ON MARVEL UNLIMITED!